and give them a slight elementary glimmering of the case, in due time an award is made which we have continually observed is pretty nearly as though the vulgar method of "*toss-up*" were resorted to, unless, indeed, the more equitable mode of halving the difference have been chosen. In the meanwhile each respectable witness of nice conscience has been proved by the brazen perverter of truth, hired to make wrong prevail, to be a very questionable person, a mere hireling who will say any thing. Hence it is commonly said that a surveyor, to be a good witness, must be a hard swearer, and if he be also a hard drinker, whose courage can be alcoholized above proof so as to resist attack, he is the man to employ.

At first, for judges, should be chosen those who, however ill-educated to the subject they may be, are still the best acquainted with it that could be selected from the bar, and who have a good knowledge of general law; in a few years a set of barristers would arise who would have become intimately acquainted with architectural jurisprudence, and then judges of the requisite information could be chosen.

Disputes relative to dilapidations, questions of price, whether upon contracts, or with master and man, or in whatever other way, could be discussed; all matters under the Building-Act could be justly, and with due solemnity, adjudicated at a moderate expense. At present many of the most respectable and conscientious professional men have great unwillingness to appear as witnesses in court, and if they be consulted upon valuations or other matters, make a stipulation that they shall not be called to give evidence in court; hence, with some exceptions, the court-business is done by the dregs of the profession; and it is not always without truth that the pure barrister, who has been hired for five guineas to make falsehood prevail in court (as in the case of the Swiss ruffian who murdered Lord William Russell, when knowing who was the guilty party, a fee caused the advocate to endeavour to fix the guilt upon a person whom he knew to be innocent), charges six surveyors with being easily procured to outwear six others, the very six having been, by his own advice, sought out for that purpose, twelve others not being produced because of their own conscience they would have sworn the reverse.

In disputes between master-builders, the jury should be composed wholly of master-builders; if between master-builders and ordinary persons, the jury might be composed of half builders and half respectable housekeepers of another class. In disputes between workman and master, the jury should be one-third masters and one-third workmen of the same trade, and the remainder of another class. In disputes between workman and workman, the jury should be half men of the same trade, the remainder indifferent persons not of the same trade. In all instances a majority of two-thirds might decide the case.

A certain number of experienced surveyors should also be attached as officers to the court, who simply by a judge's order should tax and allow definitively the amount of any bill for Builder's-work performed in any part of the empire.

Sepplea.

PROPOSED NEW BUILDING-ACT.

THE COMMITTEE of the MASTER CARPENTERS will again meet upon the above at the Freemasons' Tavern, on Monday next, at 4 o'clock.

CRITICAL NOTES UPON THE SCHEDULES OF THE PROPOSED NEW BUILDING-ACT.

BY ALFRED BARTHOLOMEW, ESQ.

SCHEDULE (C) p. 143.—There does not appear to be any provision for measuring the heights of buildings, in case they have no ceiling, or no tie-beam or collar-beam or other substitute for a tie-beam.

Any additional depth to which it may be necessary to carry down the walls of a building in order to arrive at a secure foundation, ought to be clearly excluded from the admeasurement of stories, and if the party-walls and other walls be carried down to different levels, as is sometimes necessary, clear definition ought to be provided for such cases.

We think the official referees ought to have a discretionary power relative to permitting addition to the thicknesses of walls, otherwise cases of excessive hardship and vexation will arise.

We think the Bill is by no means clear as to the mode of determining the rates of buildings. The present Act is much more definite. The Bill does not appear to state if a particular rate is to be restricted by height, area, and number of stories, or by only one or two of such conditions; in stating the number of stories, the words "*and no more*" seem to be omitted.

We think all party-walls would be more efficient against fire, more durable, and far superior in every way, if allowed to be built half a brick thinner than set down in the Bill, but rigidly exacted to be of hard stock brick-work, and with no bond and plates of wood on any account allowed thereon. A wall so built has a far greater provision of incombustible material; chains of cat-hooping or other wrought-iron may be carried close to flues without danger; the work is thus at first tied together better than if by timber, the ruin of walls by rot is avoided, and walls so constructed remain little injured, though the roof a-la fabric be burnt off; whereas, party-walls as at present formed often have to be rebuilt, in consequence of their bond-timber and wooden plates being consumed; and with all possible care on the part of the district-surveyor, still there may often be cases in which the allowing a brick and a half thick will only have four inches of brick-work between timber and timber, which, in case of rot or fire, would leave a party-wall standing in part or wholly upon only one-third of its thickness.

The term *party-pile* as applied to buildings is very indefinite, such an article being rarely found in a good building: the wretched modern mode of forming valley-roofs set upon internal gutter-plates ought to be discouraged in all possible ways.

We think the requiring parapets 12½ inches thick to buildings of the sixth rate, would be vexatious. The true art of rendering buildings secure does not lie in thickening their upper work, but in increasing the strength of the lower work in proportion to altitude; hence, in ancient buildings, as the spire of Salisbury Cathedral, the thickness of the walls of the many feet down is not equal to one brick. All buildings should, have their gutters not lying within the compass of the walls, but if possible without them, so that defective gutters may not rot any timber; the thicker the parapet, the more difficulty exists in effecting this wholesome caution.

We do not approve of the new method of denominating the *smallest* buildings of the *first* rate, but in this we would desire the old method of calling the *largest* buildings the *first* rate, and so prevent the confusion of ideas which must for a long time otherwise result.

PAGES 144, 145, 146.—The sections of the walls we consider are drawn to too small a scale; the dimensions upon them have, in no case, the clear and necessary expression of "feet" and "inches;" the marks ' and ", in some cases placed over the dimensions, we hold to be indefinite, and in the manner here used ought to be entirely abolished, for which there are certain mathematical reasons.

We think the height of openings in party-walls ought not to be confined to 8 feet, and that sills or paving of iron and some other substances ought to be allowed.

Whether piers must be on one or both faces of a party-wall does not appear. Piers ought not to be required to be wider than 13 ins. or 13½ ins., on account of making sound work with ordinary stock-bricks; in every case throughout the Bill where brick-work is required to be 14 inches wide or thick, the same amendment ought to be made.

In all cases where stone lintels are used, the weight above ought to be discharged from the lintel, to prevent inevitable fracture, as is to be seen to a horrible extent in modern buildings. The failing into this debased practice is one reason why expensive modern buildings are in so fractured a state, while from the pursuit of an opposite course, cheap ancient buildings of Pointed Architecture are often so sound, however lightly they may be.

We think the use of limestone-masonry in connection with iron doors should be forbidden except in fire-proof buildings, since such masonry is far less secure than common brick-work.

We think the relaxation in favour of fire-proof second-class buildings ought to be extended to all fire-proof buildings whatever.

We think it would be grossly vexatious to prevent a gentleman from building a stable-building containing more than twenty-five squares.

Buildings and Offices.—We think the words "*or such like buildings*" too indefinite. It is not clear whether the party-walls are to be suitable for the rate inclusive or exclusive of such additions, thus leaving the old ambiguity or loophole of the present Act.

The words "one-third of its height" are not so clearly expressed with regard to the context, as to prevent doubt.

Tall-houses, &c.—We do not think the terms "*one and a half squares*" particularly elegant; we never heard of a man being "*one and a half rogues.*"

SCHEDULE (D).—We think that provided there be below ground and below floorings the statute quantity of footing, an architect or builder ought to be allowed to form the remainder of the footings as plinths, or in any manner which he may desire, otherwise useless oppression may arise.

We object to the requirement to lay the two courses of brick-work in cement as here stated; if a quickly crisping cement be intended, the motives which we suppose have led to this proposed requirement, we believe to be fallacies. Parker's cement, which we suppose to be intended, does not prevent the rise of damp, while it is frequently not half so good as stone lime-mortar, being dead before it is used, and rotten when used; and, if quick and good, fractures from its unbending nature immediately with the slightest settlement. We therefore deem its use in foundations and for setting arches to be altogether erroneous and against cautious and truthful practice; ancient buildings of very inferior materials, by their science, hold statically together unfractured, while modern edifices are very frequently fractured in spite of such practice and the use of superior materials. Very many of the fractured modern arches are set in Parker's cement; no sound ancient arch is set in any such material.

We think as is doubtful foundations the base of a wall cannot be spread too much, that footings should be allowed to spread in any way the architect or builder may choose, provided such be not less than prescribed by statute; this wholesome discretion would in many cases be interfered with if the footings "*must*" be "*double*;" and it would be ridiculous to prevent an architect from making a footing in one course of masonry a foot thick if he so desire.

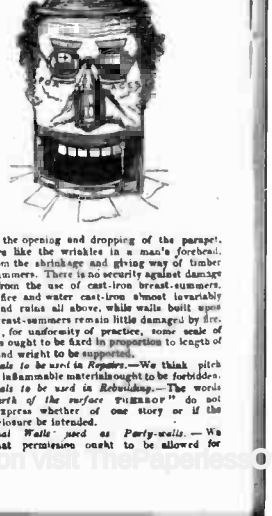
Wood and Iron.—We think that no plate or bond of wood ought to be allowed to extend into a wall so much as half the thickness of such wall, and that in walls not exceeding 13 inches in thickness, the wooden plates and bond inserted therein ought to be restricted to 4 ins.

We think that more exact definitions are required respecting the ranges of windows of printing-offices and workshops.

PAGE 147.—*Breast-summers.*—The compound term Breast-summer is here restored to its correct orthography, but ought to be separated into its elements and to be re-united only by a hyphen.

After the words "*solely on such party-wall,*" and also after the words "*story-posts fixed on solid foundations,*" should follow the words, "UNLESS THE PORTIONS OF SUCH PARTY-WALL, WHICH SHALL BEAR THE SAID BREAST-SUMMER BE OF STONE-MASONRY SATISFACTORY TO THE SURVEYOR."

We should like to see timber breast-summers superseded by arches and work of wrought-iron, which would render buildings handsomer and more secure. The two huge ruinous cracks which are found over most shop-fronts, like the deep lines in an aged man's



face, and the opening and dropping of the parapet, which are like the wrinkles in a man's forehead, result from the shrinkage and giving way of timber breast-summers. There is no security against damage by fire, from the use of cast-iron breast-summers, since by fire and water cast-iron almost invariably breaks and ruins all above, while walls built upon timber breast-summers remain little damaged by fire. We think, for uniformity of practice, some scale of scantlings ought to be fixed in proportion to length of bearing and weight to be supported.

Materials to be used in Repairs.—We think pitch and other inflammable materials ought to be forbidden.

Materials to be used in Rebuilding.—The words "*one fourth of the surface THEREOF*" do not clearly express whether of one story or if the whole inclosure be intended.

External Walls used as Party-walls.—We think that permission ought to be allowed for